



# FIRST THINGS FIRST

*The right system for bright futures*

Arizona Early Childhood Development & Health Board  
Cochise Regional Partnership Council

## WORKGROUP

### Call to Order/Introductions

The workgroup meeting of the First Things First – Cochise Regional Partnership Council was held on October 12, 2009 at approximately 9:00 a.m. at the First Things First Regional Office, 3643B S. Hwy 92, Sierra Vista, AZ 85650.

#### Members Present:

Jane Strain, Dave Howe, Ginger Ryan, Renae Humburg, Vaira Harik, Evelyn Whitmer (telephonically), Del Cabarga, Melodi Polach, Mary Sue Houser, and Nancy-Jean Welker

#### Members Absent:

Ana Bae-Limb

#### Others Present:

Melissa Avant, Pat Fleming, Robin Falconer, Cindi Alva, and Tom Reardon

Chair Jane Strain welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order.

### Call to the Public

Cindi Alva with Child & Family Resources shared with the workgroup how important home visiting is to the region and how the Regional Council's financial investment is making a difference.

Robin Falconer with the Cochise County Health Department also shared with the workgroup how the Regional Council's financial investment is making a difference, indicating that removing funds now would not be beneficial to the community. Home visitation needs ample time to be fully affective and to grow.

### Summary of September 15, 2009 Workgroup Session

Regional Coordinator Melissa Avant provided a summary of what was discussed during the September 15, 2009 Workgroup Session and reiterated the importance of building a system, and the importance of where strategies fall within the Pyramid Model. Ms. Avant also reminded the workgroup of the importance of declaring conflict of interest and requested that workgroup members declare their conflict before proceeding into discussion.

### **Discussion of Fiscal Year 2011 Allocations**

Ms. Avant led the workgroup in a discussion regarding the FY2011 Allocations. She reminded the workgroup that Quality First was a 3 year commitment, and therefore, \$330,000 would automatically go towards that strategy for FY2011. In regards to the Evaluation and Needs & Assets allocation, the Regional Council voted to roll the funding over from FY2010 to FY2011. The \$60,000 for Evaluation and Needs & Assets, in addition to the \$208,552 carry forward brings a total of \$268,552 to be rolled over into the \$2.6 million FY2011 Allocation.

Chair Strain started discussions about the statewide strategies, beginning with the Emergency Child Scholarships. Dave Howe and Mary Sue Houser declared conflict of interest. The workgroup had a discussion regarding the history of the Emergency Child Scholarships and their effectiveness, and whether this strategy meets the objectives of the Regional Council. Suggestions discussed included paying a portion of tuition for parents in an effort to slowly taper them off of assistance, tax credits at the preschool level, and parent education classes. A need for better coordination of strategies, as opposed to piecemealing strategies, was recognized.

Chair Strain moved onto to the discussion of Emergency Food Boxes. Discussion took place about the ethical, economical, philosophical and moral issues that surround this strategy.

The workgroup then discussed and reminded one another of the overall goal of the Regional Council: To prepare birth to five year olds for kindergarten. The workgroup discussed hiring a social worker to handle all the programs in an effort to qualify all of the families for the services (home visiting, food boxes, child care scholarships, etc.) and to coordinate all of the strategies. Ms. Avant reminded the workgroup that the Regional Council voted and approved Coordination Strategy #8 back in July which is a government to government agreement with U of A College of Public Health to handle the coordination of all the strategies. The Regional Council is waiting for the vendor to complete their necessary paperwork before moving forward.

Ms. Avant began discussions on the Home Visitation Strategy and asked for any conflicts of interest to be declared. Vaira Harik declared conflict of interest on this strategy. Cindi Alva and Robin Falconer answered the workgroup's questions regarding home visitation and the services they are delivering. The workgroup discussed allowing the home visitation the opportunity to get the programs and coordination up and running and then revisit the issue at a later date. The workgroup discussed the need to find an effective way of identifying gaps in the coordination and delivery of services. Cindi Alva proposed adding a piece to their monthly reports to include a list of identified gaps in services.

The workgroup then discussed the Information and Knowledge Strategy #7 and the need that surrounds getting the First Things First name out to the public in making early childhood development a top priority.

The workgroup discussed the Mental Health Strategy #6, which is currently handled by Easter Seals Blake Foundation (building the infrastructure). This strategy covers the professional development of individuals in the field of infant/toddler mental health.

The workgroup discussed the Childhood Obesity Strategy #5. Vaira Harik, David Howe, and Evelyn Whitmer declared conflict of interest on this strategy. This contract is renewable; however, the Regional Council originally expressed their desire to have this strategy offered countywide. Currently it is only offered in centers. The workgroup directed questions to Robin Falconer from the Cochise Health



Department in regards to the need, effectiveness and service numbers. The workgroup discussed whether there is a need to increase the funding amount in order to be more effective and to reach service numbers larger than that of just childcare centers, but also countywide. The workgroup directed staff (Ms. Avant) to gather additional information and present it to the Regional Council on October 29<sup>th</sup> in an effort to see if allocating additional dollars towards this strategy would be necessary and beneficial.

The workgroup began discussion on the T.E.A.C.H. Strategy #4. Jane Strain declared conflict of interest on this strategy. Presently, the regional allocation of \$135,000 for 29 scholars has not been touched. The workgroup discussed the barriers and lack of capacity for this strategy. The workgroup discussed solutions, such as holding a conference to recruit participation. The workgroup discussed cutting the number of scholars in half (15), and not allocating as much money for the next fiscal year.

The workgroup discussed the Quality First Strategy #3. Ms. Avant indicated that there has been a very good response from centers within the region. There is currently a waiting list. The workgroup agreed that additional dollars should be allocated to this strategy (possibly 5 additional centers). The workgroup instructed Ms. Avant to research how many homes and centers are on the waiting list, and the workgroup agreed that the allocation needs to include those on the waiting list.

The workgroup discussed the Therapist Strategy #2. Ms. Avant explained that at the state level, an administrative home has been selected (ADHS) to handle the contracts for this strategy. The workgroup discussed creating a letter/statement as a Regional Council to submit at the state level expressing their desire to support cross state collaboration with universities.

The workgroup discussed the Home Visiting Strategy #1, the RFGA process, and the need to do the home visiting strategy through an RFGA process. Member Harik declared a conflict. Ms. Avant informed the workgroup that if they want to make amendments to the current agreement with the home visitation vendor, that it would have to be done through an RFGA process. There was discussion about doing three separate RFGA's for the home visiting strategy. Discussion took place about potentially including oral health education, nutrition education and literacy into the scope of work of the home visiting RFGA.

In summary, the workgroup recommends the following:

Home Visitation Program –remain the same and include Early Literacy

Therapists – Remain the same

Quality First – 5 new centers and 5 new homes

T.E.A.C.H. – decrease to 15 scholars

Health & Nutrition – remain the same and increase to include oral health education

Mental Health – remain the same

Communication – remain the same

Coordination – increase

Evaluation – remain the same

Needs and Assets – remain the same

Emergency Food Boxes – 0

Emergency Child Scholarships – 0

Next regular council meeting is scheduled for October 29<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 in Benson. Chair Strain asked that the workgroup review their notes and be ready to make decisions.

**Adjournment**

There being no further discussion, Chair Strain adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:00 p.m.

Dated this 29 day of October, 2019

Submitted By: Edith Lee  
Administrative Assistant

Approved By: Jane Strain  
Chair, Jane Strain